

Adding a Master Electrical Cutoff Switch Bill Lee – February 2012

One aspect of the normal Model A that is troubling is that the electrical system is always “hot”. In other words, there is always power in many places of the car with no easy way to shut it off. A modern car uses relays that close when the ignition key is turned on, and power elsewhere in the car is cut off when the key is off. Not so in a Model A.

Several articles have been written and the occasional thread on Ahooga or FordBarn talk about adding an electrical shut-off switch for safety. One point of confusion is where it should be located: **it MUST be in the ground line!** Everybody (well, at least MOST!) have a fuse that protects the ignition and lights and ... , but what protects the starter? And it's a frozen starter switch that can create a real bad day! Just ask Joe about his A at Winnsboro last fall!

I added a switch, available from most all of the A parts suppliers, in the ground line of my A. I mounted it to a 3/32” sheet of aluminum that I cut to position the switch behind the cross member and just under the front edge of my seat. I wanted the switch where I could activate it quickly in emergency, and somewhere under the hood is NOT the answer. The pictures tell the story.



The switch was mounted so that it extended through the front edge of the center floor board on my A. That positions it at the back edge of the body cross member and just in front of the Emergency Brake Cross Shaft. Note that I had to make a small notch on the body cross member to give me clearance.

The switch in itself is too short to reach all the way through the floor board from its location. If you look closely you will see an extension I made: a piece of 1/2” aluminum barstock drilled on one end to slip over the actuating shaft of the switch

with a set screw in the side, and then shaped to allow the switch handle to be mounted up top. Its length was made to allow for the floor boards and carpet.



The switch was mounted to a piece of 3/32” aluminum sheet that I shaped to fit. It is attached to the bottom of the wooden cross member under the body cross member. The ground wires run from the battery to the switch (the black wire) and then from the switch to the frame (the red wire).



There is also a ground wire from the transmission to the frame that you can see in the picture at the left.

With my seat set-back mounts, the switch is right under the front edge where it is very convenient to access without being in the way.